

Rockford Fire Department



Strategic Plan 2013



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Introduction

The City of Rockford, county seat of Winnebago County, is located in north central Illinois approximately 70 miles northwest of Chicago. According to the United States Census Bureau, Rockford is the largest city in the area with a population of 152,222. The jurisdiction covers approximately 64 square miles.

The Rockford Fire Department was established in 1855 as a volunteer organization. The first paid firefighters were hired in May of 1881 and consisted of a Fire Chief and five firefighters with a steam-powered, horse-drawn apparatus. The organization has grown to be the second largest fire department in the State of Illinois, staffed with 333 (sworn, support and Emergency 9-1-1) members, responding to 24,557 incidents in 2012 (3.45% increase from 2011). Throughout its history the Department has consistently worked to achieve the highest level of professionalism and efficiency on behalf of those it serves.

In November of 2012, the Department received annual compliance approval for the Center for Public Safety Excellence's (CPSE) accreditation process. The Department achieved accredited status through the (CPSE) in August of 2012, and is one of only 160 departments throughout the world to receive final accreditation. The process required years of preparation and work from a core group of individuals who spent countless hours credentialing the Department through several individual documents.

The group developed a five-year strategic plan, conducted a comprehensive risk assessment and standards of coverage study, and developed a comprehensive self assessment document. Each of these components had to meet strict criteria and rigid standards within a very narrow set of parameters in order to be deemed compliant and achieve accreditation.

It is important to note that the accreditation process is a continuous and dynamic progression of improvement for an organization. The process does not stop after achieving accredited status; instead, it demands commitment and flexibility as an organization navigates the present and future.

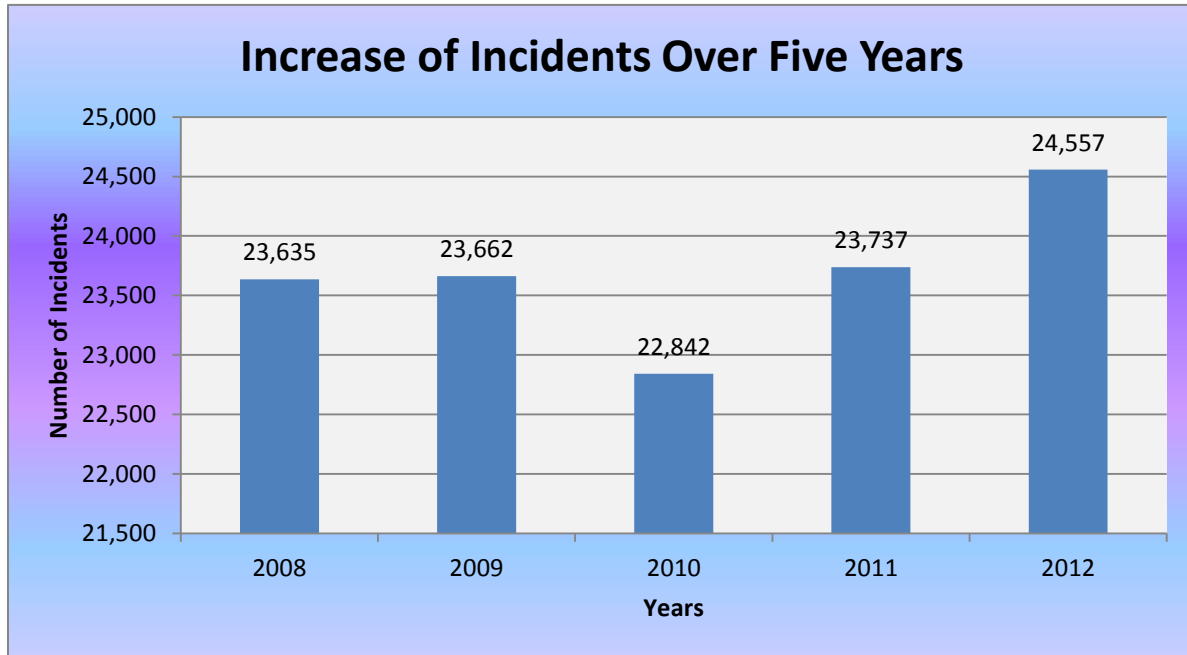
In addition to achieving accredited status, the Department currently holds an Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating of "Class 2."



Organizational Background

The Department currently provides services through the work of four (4) divisions: Administration Division, Fire Prevention and Training Division, Operations Division, and 9-1-1 Division. The Department's incident history over the past five years shows an overall increase of 3.80% and is depicted in the following graph:

Figure 1: Increase of Incidents Over Five Years



Utilizing eleven (11) fire stations, the department operates with nine (9) engine companies, two (2) quint companies, one (1) ladder company, one (1) quint/quick response vehicle company, one (1) quick response vehicle company, and five (5) advanced life support (ALS) ambulances, and two (2) district chiefs. All fire companies have the capability of providing ALS emergency medical care.

The Department also provides many special operations capabilities. These include the following: hazardous materials; water rescue and recovery; extrication; trench; confined space; structural collapse; high/low angle rope; and airport rescue and fire fighting services at the Chicago-Rockford International Airport.

Additionally, the Department is a member of Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) Division Eight. There are twenty-five (25) fire departments that belong to MABAS Division Eight sharing resources on a regular basis. The Department responds to MABAS Division Eight requests and has the potential to respond for assistance to over 794 square miles. In addition, the Department has written agreements with five (5) other MABAS Divisions, which cover 5,000 square miles, to provide assistance with water rescue, hazardous materials and technical rescue.



Community-Driven Strategic Plan

Planning Process

The strategic planning process is an opportunity to unify the Department's administration with the internal and external stakeholders through a common understanding of the organization's direction, how those involved can work to that common purpose, and how progress quantifies and measures success.

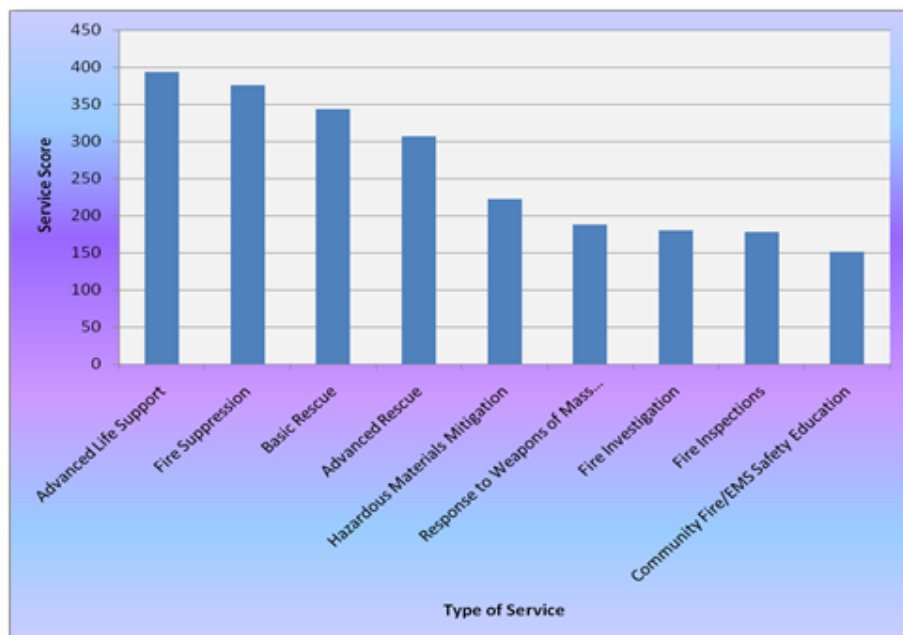
External Stakeholders

As part of the Department's original strategic plan development, the external stakeholders consisted of various business and community organization leaders. The current strategic planning process has solicited the direct input of citizens through various neighborhood organizations and user surveys.

Customer-Prioritization Surveys

The CPSE Customer-Centered/Prioritization of Services survey was used as a tool to gather input from the community. In an effort to include a wide variety of citizens, the Department targeted neighborhood organizations over a period of five months. The prioritization of services results are depicted in the graph below. In addition to the CPSE-developed survey, the Department also included five service-related questions to solicit customer expectations. Results of the surveys have been tallied and posted on the Department's SharePoint website.

Figure 2: Customer Service Prioritization Results





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The following table is a summary of the top five responses from each service question contained in the Customer Prioritization Survey.

Figure 3: Customer Questionnaire Summary

<i>List expectations, in priority, of your fire department:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prompt response (25)• Serving those in need by putting out fires and saving lives (10)• Educating the community regarding our services and fire safety (9)• Well-trained and prepared personnel (4)• Professional and dedicated personnel (4)
<i>List concerns regarding your fire department:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staffing cuts (18)• Reduction in funding (4)• Too many trucks on scene based on call type (4)• Better/updated equipment and apparatus (3)• Quick response (2)• Firefighter safety (2)• Too many personnel on apparatus (2)• More community involvement (2)
<i>List feedback or strengths you would like to share regarding your fire department:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department provides professional services (7)• Fast response times (6)• Personnel are kind (5)• Appreciate community involvement (4)• Well-trained personnel (3)
<i>List general remarks for your fire department:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doing a good/great/excellent job (18)• Thank you (6)• More public education (3)• Need more diversity/minorities (2)• Have questions regarding new QRV program (2)
<i>Based on City's budget concerns, are you worried about reduction of fire/emergency services?:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes. Do not reduce staffing (16)• No. Not necessarily (reason not given) (7)• No. Budget cuts may be necessary (5)• Yes. Concerns about infrastructure/apparatus (4)• Yes. Make cuts elsewhere (4)



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The Department also examined the external stakeholders' responses from the 2007 Customer Prioritization survey to find that both the prioritization of services and the service-related questions revealed similar results as those found in the recent surveys.

Customer Service Surveys

The Department also seeks input through customer surveys regarding emergency medical services and fire suppression. The results are maintained in a database that generates customer satisfaction reports, which are then used for RockStat presentations with other City departments.

Figure 3: Customer Service Survey Results

Question	Answer	Total Answered	Percentage of Total Answered	Outstanding or Excellent	
<i>The 911 call was handled in a prompt, courteous, and competent manner:</i>	Outstanding	442	59.73%	702	94.86%
	Excellent	260	35.14%		
	Average	26	3.51%		
	Fair	7	0.95%		
	Poor	5	0.68%		
	Total Answered	740			
<i>The 911 instructions given prior to the arrival of the paramedics were:</i>	Outstanding	323	48.35%	608	91.02%
	Excellent	285	42.66%		
	Average	45	6.74%		
	Fair	12	1.80%		
	Poor	3	0.45%		
	Total Answered	668			
<i>The paramedic crew acted in a concerned, caring, and professional manner:</i>	Outstanding	701	64.91%	1,036	95.93%
	Excellent	335	31.02%		
	Average	29	2.69%		
	Fair	10	0.93%		
	Poor	5	0.46%		
	Total Answered	1,080			
<i>The paramedics clearly explained the procedures performed:</i>	Outstanding	413	55.21%	693	92.65%
	Excellent	280	37.43%		
	Average	37	4.95%		
	Fair	11	1.47%		
	Poor	7	0.94%		
	Total Answered	748			
<i>How would you rate the overall quality of the care provided:</i>	Outstanding	552	65.02%	812	95.64%
	Excellent	260	30.62%		
	Average	25	2.94%		
	Fair	9	1.06%		
	Poor	3	0.35%		
	Total Answered	849			
<i>How would you rate your overall experience with our services:</i>	Outstanding	538	63.67%	804	95.15%
	Excellent	266	31.48%		
	Average	26	3.08%		
	Fair	10	1.18%		
	Poor	5	0.59%		
	Total Answered	845			



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The results of the customer service surveys for 2012 demonstrate that the Department delivers outstanding or excellent service at least 91% of the time in each of the categories. Additionally, customers rated service delivery as fair or poor 1.8% or less of the time in each of the categories.

Internal Stakeholders

With great success, the Department engaged in a strategic planning process that was a departure from previous strategic planning endeavors and goal-setting processes. The Department utilized a third-party who conducted a three-day workshop in 2011 with a cross-section of personnel spanning all divisions and ranks within the organization, and included members from the internal accreditation workgroup.

Howard Cross, from Howard Cross and Associates, conducted his workshop entitled Strategic Planning: Embracing the Future. Over the course of the three days, the participants (as a whole) developed new mission and vision statements, and identified the Department's core values and critical issues. During breakout sessions among the different divisions, the individual groups developed goals pertaining to each division.

After the initial workshop, the entire group met for three additional four-hour sessions to complete the goal development portion of the strategic plan. Additionally, members of the administration along with members from the accreditation workgroup partnered in making face-to-face visits to each fire station on each shift to deliver the new mission and vision statements, and to discuss the components of the entire accreditation process.

In October of 2012, the Department's internal stakeholder group engaged in an additional one-day session with Howard Cross. The group reviewed the Department's goal-planning process, assessed the 2012 annual goals, developed goals for the upcoming year, and updated the Strategic Plan.

Although the Department had existing mission and vision statements and had previously identified core values and critical issues, all aspects were revisited during the workshop. The Department is committed to keeping these fundamental elements of the organization current and meaningful so that members have clear direction regarding the accomplishment of goals, objectives, and critical tasks.

Internal stakeholders who participated in the 2012 strategic planning workshop are listed in the table below.



Figure 4: Rockford Fire Department Internal Stakeholders Group

Internal Stakeholders Group	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Derek Bergsten, Fire Chief• Joe Corl, Division Chief of Operations• Greg Castronovo, Division Chief of Administration• Matt Knott, Division Chief of Fire Prevention and Training• Sandy Stansell, 911 Administrator• Steve Preiss, District Chief• Benny Ognibene, District Chief• Bud Turner, District Chief• Jim Rife, District Chief• Mark Marinaro, Fire Prevention Coordinator• Bob Vertiz, EMS Training Coordinator• Brian Drerup, Fire Training Coordinator• Rick Tetrick, Shop Coordinator• Tracy Renfro, Captain• Michele Pankow, Captain/Accreditation Manager• Brad Walker, Lieutenant – Local 413 President• Mike Schnaper, Inspector• Erica Nunez, Firefighter/Paramedic• Chris Scrol, Firefighter/EMT – Local 413 Secretary• Elizabeth Russell, Statistical Analyst• Tad Shaver, Technical Services Coordinator• Judi Yehling, Administrative Assistant	

The Department's current mission and vision statements, and core values are illustrated below.

Figure 5: Mission Statement

The mission of the Rockford Fire Department is to protect the lives and property of our community through fire, emergency medical and life safety services.



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Figure 6: Vision Statement

The members of the Rockford Fire Department are professionals dedicated to provide services that are innovative and progressive ensuring the safest environment for our community.

Figure 7: Core Values

<i>Professionalism</i>	<i>Service</i>
<i>Respect</i>	<i>Loyalty</i>
<i>Dedication</i>	<i>Compassion</i>
<i>Integrity</i>	<i>Safety</i>

In an effort to identify the critical issues facing the Department and its personnel, the group participated in breakout sessions. During this time each breakout group brainstormed the variety of concerns confronting the organization and reviewed the critical issues. After much debate, the planning group reached a consensus and determined that the five critical issues on which the Department needs to focus remained the same as the previous year, and are depicted in the table below.

Figure 8: Critical Issues

Number of Ambulances
Morale
Communications
Wellness/Fitness
Media Relations



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During breakout sessions among the different divisions, the individual groups developed goals for their respective divisions. Each group focused on developing attainable goals that supported the Department's mission, vision, and core values. Many of these goals were designed to address the identified critical issues.



Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives provide specific timelines for completion. The strategic planning group will meet periodically to review progress toward these goals and objectives, and adjust timelines and specific targets as needed. In an effort to ensure transparency and measure progress toward goals, objectives and critical tasks, the Department has established a tracking program that is accessible to all members of the organization via the SharePoint website.

All objectives have been developed using the SMART method:

- **S** – specific
- **M** – measurable
- **A** – attainable
- **R** – relevant
- **T** – timely



Administration Division Goals

Goal #1: Centralize all Fire Department information.

- ❖ *Objective #1:* Keep all department information current on SharePoint (On-going)

Critical Tasks

- Ensure all memos and general orders are located on SharePoint
- Update all forms
- Update *Rules & Regulations* and *Standard Operating Procedures*

- ❖ *Objective #2:* Create procedural manual on SharePoint (On-going)

Critical Tasks

- Identify procedures
- Formulate steps for each procedure
- Link all associated documents
- Create button!

Goal #2: To improve overall equipment repair facility operations.

- ❖ *Objective #1:* Facility improvements

Critical Task

- Needs assessment (November 2013)

- ❖ *Objective #2:* Operational improvements (November 2013)

Critical Tasks

- Create parts room
- Create supply room
- Create process for managing consumable inventory
- Update diagnostic software

Goal #3: To evaluate all fixed facilities.

- ❖ *Objective #1:* Conduct a needs assessment for all fixed facilities

Critical Tasks

- Schedule facility walk-throughs with Public Works and Department personnel (March 2013)
- Prioritize fixed facility repairs and improvements (April 2013)
- Begin repairs and improvements (May 2013)

- ❖ *Objective #2:* Develop plan for re-location of Fire Station #3 – 1520 S. Main St.

Critical Tasks

- Construct timeline based on S. Main St. road project, proposed land acquisition, and funding (February 2013)
- Develop and conduct Request for Proposal for fire station construction (January 2013)
- Develop plan for temporary, alternate location for project delays (December 2013)



Goal #4: To maintain accredited status through Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)

- ❖ *Objective #1:* Update the Strategic Plan (March 2013).

Critical Tasks

- Conduct strategic planning session with Howard Cross
- Develop 2013 Department goals
- Update the current Strategic Plan with 2013 goals and long-range considerations

- ❖ *Objective #2:* Complete the Annual Compliance Report (ACR) required for accreditation Status (July 2013).

Critical Tasks

- Review the current year's first response and total response data and present to CPSE
- Complete the Annual Compliance Report with accompanying documentation
- Submit to CPSE by specified timeframe

911 Division Goals

Goal: To further improve the efficiency of public safety and emergency services provided by 911

- ❖ *Objective:* Evaluate duties in the Center that can be streamlined for reduction of call processing and response time.

Critical Tasks

- Have the user group streamline the process/operations in the center
- Continue to look at call handling
- Find opportunities for more customer service training
- Establish a train-the-trainer program for new telecommunicators
- Provide additional instructor training

Fire Prevention and Training Division Goals

Goal #1: Strengthen the knowledge and skills of our personnel in direct support of our mission.

- ❖ *Objective #1:* Improve communications between Training and Fire Prevention Division and all personnel (October 2013)

Critical Tasks

- Improve the use of SharePoint
- Develop new format for personnel certification lists
- Continue exploration of other multi-media mediums



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- ❖ *Objective #2:* Expand role/responsibility of Training Committee (December 2013)

Critical Tasks

- Development of prop/fireground skill specialist program
- Review/revise Multi-year Training and Exercise Plan
- Work with Operations Division to coordinate drill objectives/content

- ❖ *Objective #3:* Expand monthly station-specific training opportunities (December 2013)

Critical Tasks

- Evaluate effectiveness and identify obstacles to station-specific training day (Tuesday)
- Evaluate existing online EMS CE programs and determine best solution based on Department needs/resources
- Develop new format for company level training

Goal #2: Improve size and scope of projects offered and qualifications of the Fire Prevention/Training Division.

- ❖ *Objective #1:* Fire stop devices in housing authority and high-rise properties (June 2013)

Critical Tasks

- Partnerships developed
- Funding source
- Distribution

- ❖ *Objective #2:* Youth career development programs (January 2013)

Critical Tasks

- Park District summer camp
- Explorer program
- College/career readiness academy

- ❖ *Objective #3:* Implement self-inspection program (June 2013)

Critical Tasks

- Identify eligible occupancies
- Educate/train property managers
- Develop Firehouse procedures related to self-scheduling and completing inspections

- ❖ *Objective #4:* Certification of Inspectors to ICC Inspector I Certification & continuing education (June 2013)

Critical Tasks

- Study materials
- Practice test
- Sit for ICC exam
- Continuing education plan

- ❖ *Objective #5:* Expand/improve vacant building identification process (On-going)

Critical Tasks

- Label identified buildings
- Continue to work/guide existing Committee



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❖ *Objective #6:* Law enforcement designation (October 2013)

Critical Tasks

- Research process
- Reach out to other arson units that have LED

❖ *Objective #7:* Realignment of duties and responsibilities

Critical Tasks

- Evaluate strengths/weaknesses
 - Evaluate current work loads
 - Match skills to assignments
 - Prioritize tasks assigned
-

Operations Division Goals

Goal #1: To continue defining company priorities by including the responsibilities that are directly related to emergency operations and training.

❖ *Objective #1:* Continue working with the Training Division to continue Training Tuesday (On-going)

Critical Tasks

- Continue the communication between the Training Division, Operations Chief, District Chiefs and companies to ensure that other Department training and activities are not scheduled on designated days (Ongoing).
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the program mid-year (June 2013).

❖ *Objective #2:* Work with the Training Division to coordinate drill content

Critical Tasks

- Mass casualty drill (October 2013)
- New equipment training, i.e. new fan (Ongoing)

❖ *Objective #3:* Continue working with the Fire Prevention and Training Division to establish a more formalized approach to career/officer development.

Critical Tasks

- Develop an officer candidate/acting officer guide (April 2013)
- Continue to formalize the officer candidate mentor program (April 2013)
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the current officer awareness program (August 2013)
- Update the District Chief reference guide (March 2013)

❖ *Objective #4:* Review current apparatus deployment practices regularly (Ongoing).

Critical Tasks

- QRV placement, response and value.
- Available resources during incidents, i.e. move-ups.
- Use of the Status Board.
- Reducing or downgrading incidents to non-emergency.



Goal #2: To re-evaluate and prioritize the nonemergency responsibilities at the company level

- ❖ *Objective #1:* To complete annual equipment testing.

Critical Tasks:

- Conduct annual hose testing (July 2013)
- Evaluate hose inventory and complete database corrections (September 2013)
- Conduct annual ladder testing (July 2013)
- Evaluate ladder inventory and complete database corrections (September 2013)

- ❖ *Objective #2:* Work with the Fire Prevention and Training Division to conduct multi-company drill reinforcing accurate Firehouse documentation.

Critical Task

- Conduct a Department-wide Firehouse/NFIR documentation drill (March 2013)

- ❖ *Objective #3:* To review the entire preplan process.

Critical Tasks

- Complete five preplans/company/shift by established timeline (September 2013).
- Review preplan inconsistencies, ensuring the most current drawing is linked to the file.

- ❖ *Objective #4:* Continue to work with Fire Prevention Bureau regarding neighborhood activities.

- ❖ *Objective #5:* Work with the Training and Fire Prevention Division to develop notification and tracking process for "super user."

Critical Tasks

- Develop a notification "flow" for the companies (April 2013)
- Develop a tracking procedure for the Operations Division (April 2013)
- Communicate the notification and tracking procedures to the companies (April 2013)
- Review and evaluate the process (December 2013)

- ❖ *Objective #6:* Work the Training and Fire Prevention Division to conduct a Department-wide drill reinforcing accurate Firehouse documentation.

Critical Tasks

- Firehouse/NFIR (April 2013)
- Equipment/inventory (December 2013)
- Training records (April 2013)

- ❖ *Objective #7:* Continue to provide wellness benefits and programs for all personnel.

Critical Tasks

- Increase the number of physicals received by the Department's members' own physician.
- Provide a form for physicians with NFPA requirements
- Meet with the City regarding physicals to credit toward wellness discount
- Provide a job-related consumption course and/or fitness assessment for all personnel.



Long-Range Considerations

The Rockford Fire Department Strategic Plan creates a platform for a wide range of initiatives. This strategic plan will come to life by being shared, debated, and implemented in the context of organizational realities.

The strategic plan contains goals that will be updated annually to embrace newly identified challenges. Critical issues that extend into the future have also been considered. Although some of the critical issues have defined timelines and strategies, the Department is limited by budgetary, contractual, technological, and intangible factors, which inhibit specific goal development. These issues include:

Fire apparatus procurement

In early 2012, the City entered into a seven year leasing agreement which includes three quint apparatus, one engine, two sport utility vehicles, and three sedans for during the year. Plans are to address further apparatus requirements with additional agreements over the next three years that would provide for all front line apparatus and support vehicle needs. The capital replacement plan is outlined in the following table.

Figure 9: Capital Replacement Plan

Capital Replacement Plan					
Vehicle Type	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Ambulance	0	4	2	3	9
Engine	1	4	2	2	9
Quint	3	0	1	1	5
Van	0	0	1	0	1
Sedan	4	2	2	1	9
SUV	4	1	1	2	8
Truck	0	2	2	1	5

Additional ambulance companies

The current collective bargaining agreement (CBA) provides for a limit of five ambulance companies. The Department is currently negotiating for additional ambulance companies with Local 413.

Additional facilities

Statistical analysis and facility recommendations designed to provide for both resource distribution and concentration factors will continue. Due to the State's South Main Road Project, Station #3 relocation is aggressively being pursued consistent with the Standards of Cover recommendations. The current State timeline dictates that Station #3's apron will be



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rendered unusable by April 2014. The Department is working closely with the City regarding land procurement and architects for this project.

Facility improvements

The Department continues to work with the City Public Works Department to address station maintenance and improvements. Additional improvements include office enhancements at the maintenance facility, and upgrades to the training facility through grants and partnerships with local trade unions.

Workforce diversity

The Department recognizes the need for a workforce which represents the community. Both elected officials' and community survey comments have expressed the desire for a diverse department.

Paramedic class

Continuation of the paramedic training program is critical for service delivery. Contractual issues, including the number of ambulances, are factors as well as the need to rotate personnel through assignments. In addition to the 12 students sent to paramedic class in 2012, the Department has tentatively scheduled a paramedic class for the fall of 2013.

Expanded officer development program

The Department has developed an internal training program for new officers and officer candidates. This program will continue to be assessed for content and relevance for future participants. Through the collective bargaining process, the Department has tentatively agreed upon promotional bonus points for Fire Officer I and II certifications for the positions of Lieutenant and Captain, respectively.

Technological hardware upgrades

Improvements in radio communication equipment, mobile data computers, and a variety of fire suppression equipment are currently either being implemented or researched.

Accreditation

Although accreditation represents a 5-year timeline, there is an annual compliance review that is conducted. This review specifically addresses recommendations made by the peer assessment team and whether or not the Department is in compliance with these recommendations on annual basis. In addition to the Strategic Plan annual update and the Annual Compliance Report, the Department must conduct a Standards of Coverage study every five years. The Accreditation Work Group will begin conducting this study in early 2015.

The Department is scheduled for a site visit from CPSE in late 2015 or early 2016 for re-accreditation. In an effort to maintain the Department's accreditation status, the Accreditation Work Group will continue to keep data and documents current, as accreditation is a continuous process through the Department strives to improve its service to the community.



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These issues will provide the basis for future strategic planning efforts in order to maintain organizational and community commitment to the plan. Everyone who has a vested interest in the present and the future of the Rockford Fire Department also has a role and responsibility in this strategic plan.



Glossary of Terms

For the purposes of the Community-Driven Strategic Planning, the following terms have the meanings set forth below:

Accreditation	A process by which an association or agency evaluates and recognizes a program of study or an institution as meeting certain predetermined standards or qualifications. It applies only to institutions or agencies and their programs of study or their services. Accreditation ensures a basic level of quality in the services received from an agency.
Accredited	The act of accrediting or the state of being accredited , especially the granting of approval to an institution or agency by an official review board or organization that has established nationally accepted standards.
Customers	The person or group who establishes the requirement of a process and receives or uses the outputs of that process; or the person or entity directly served by the department or agency.
Goal	A broad target that defines how the agency will carry out its mission over a specific period of time, something to accomplish in assisting the agency to move forward.
Mission	An enduring statement of purpose, the organization's reason for existence. Describes what the organization does, for whom it does it, and how it does it.
Objective	A specific, measurable accomplishment required to realize the successful completion of a strategic goal.
Stakeholder	Any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on, or influence, the organization's resources or outputs, is affected by those outputs, or has an interest in or expectation of the organization.
Strategic Plan	A long-range planning document that defines the mission of the agency and broadly identifies how it will be accomplished, and that provide the framework for more detailed annual and operational plans.



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Strategic Planning

The continuous and systematic process whereby guiding members of an organization make decisions about its future, develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future, and determine how success is to be measured.

Vision

An idealized view of a desirable and potentially achievable future state - where or what an organization would like to be in the future.